

Idaho Sheep Industry Suffers A \$4.26 Million Death And Theft Loss

Idaho sheep producers lost an estimated 40,000 head of sheep and lambs from all causes, valued at \$4.26 million, in 1998. This compares with losses totaling 43,000 head with a value of \$4.73 million in 1997.

Predator losses at 36.3 percent, accounted for the largest share of losses. Coyotes did the most damage, at 11,200 head of sheep and lambs, and continued to be the number one cause of death in both lambs and mature sheep. Losses from coyotes alone were valued at \$1.19 million. Cougars claimed 1,200 head of sheep and lambs valued at \$128,000; bears were responsible for the deaths of 1,100 head, valued at \$117,000; dogs caused 500 deaths, valued at \$53,000; and fox killed 200 head, valued at \$21,000. Losses from other and unknown predators, including bobcats, eagles and wolves, accounted for an additional 300 head of sheep and lambs.

After coyote losses, the next leading cause of death in sheep and lambs was disease, at 6,500 head or 16.3 percent of all losses. Weather killed 5,100 head; lambing complications claimed 4,400; 1,500 were lost to poisoning; 1,400 died of old age; and 300 were lost to theft. Other causes such as accidents, fire, starvation and dehydration caused an additional 2,800 sheep and lamb deaths during 1998.

Sheep and Lamb Losses: by Cause, Idaho, 1996-98

Cause of Death	Sheep						Lambs 1/						Value of All Sheep and Lambs 3/4/5/		
	Head			Percent of Total Loss 2/			Head			Percent of Total Loss 2/					
	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
	1000 Dollars														
Coyote	2,200	1,900	2,500	18.3	19.0	25.0	8,500	8,900	8,700	25.8	27.0	29.0	1,097	1,188	1,193
Dog	800	200	200	6.7	2.0	2.0	1,000	400	300	3.0	1.2	1.0	185	66	53
Bear	700	400	500	5.8	4.0	5.0	800	700	600	2.4	2.1	2.0	154	121	117
Cougar	200	300	300	1.7	3.0	3.0	500	1,100	900	1.5	3.3	3.0	72	154	128
Fox	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	700	400	200	2.1	1.2	0.7	72	44	21
Other 6/ 7/ 8/	0	100	0	0.0	1.0	0.0	200	900	100	0.6	2.7	0.3	21	110	11
Unknown Predator	100	0	0	0.8	0.0	0.0	100	300	200	0.3	0.9	0.7	21	33	21
TOTAL PREDATORS	4,000	2,900	3,500	33.3	29.0	35.0	11,800	12,700	11,000	35.8	38.5	36.7	1,622	1,716	1,544
Weather	300	200	100	2.5	2.0	1.0	4,400	5,200	5,000	13.3	15.8	16.7	482	594	543
Disease	1,700	1,700	1,300	14.2	17.0	13.0	5,700	5,400	5,200	17.3	16.4	17.3	759	781	692
Poison	500	1,100	800	4.2	11.0	8.0	800	800	700	2.4	2.4	2.3	133	209	160
Lambing Complications	1,400	1,300	1,200	11.7	13.0	12.0	5,700	4,700	3,200	17.3	14.2	10.7	728	660	469
Old Age	1,900	1,400	1,400	15.8	14.0	14.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	195	154	149
Theft	600	100	100	5.0	1.0	1.0	200	100	200	0.6	0.3	0.7	82	22	32
On Back	200	100	100	1.7	1.0	1.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21	11	11
Other 9/	100	400	500	0.8	4.0	5.0	700	2,000	2,300	2.1	6.1	7.7	82	264	298
Unknown Causes 10/	1,300	800	1,000	10.8	8.0	10.0	3,700	2,100	2,400	11.2	6.4	8.0	513	319	362
TOTAL	12,000	10,000	10,000	100.0	100.0	100.0	33,000	33,000	30,000	100.0	100.0	100.0	4,617	4,730	4,260

1/ Includes lamb deaths before docking of 17,000 in 1996 and 1997 and 16,000 in 1998. 2/ Percentages may not add due to rounding. 3/ Based on average of beginning year and end of year value of head: 1996-\$102.50, 1997-\$110, 1998-\$106.50. 4/ Rounded to nearest 1,000 dollars, 5/ Dollar values were rounded to add to total. 6/ In 1996 includes bobcats, eagles, wolves etc. 7/ In 1997 includes bobcats, eagles, wolves, etc. 8/ In 1998 includes bobcats, eagles, wolves, etc. 9/ Includes accidents, fire, starvation, dehydration, etc. 10/ Exact cause of death unidentifiable. May include some predator loss